

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Applicants have cancelled Claim 7-9. Also, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 6, 10, and 12, in the following, in which added text is underlined and deleted text is stricken through.

1. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device, wherein the tubular suture reinforcement material is formed by stacking two sheet-like materials and sewing together both ends of ~~one or the~~ two sheet-like materials ~~are sewed using a two chain stitches (intralooping stitches) with a single thread to form a tubular shape, and one or two each~~ thread ends at ~~one or two each~~ sewing ends ~~are~~ is suitably extended, and the thread end is passed through an anterior loop continuous to the thread end, thereby preventing the thread from unraveling.

2. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein the tip part of the suture reinforcement material is sewed in a tapering manner or sewed into a bag-like shape.

3. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein at least one portion of the sheet-like material is made of at least one member selected from the group consisting of knitted materials, woven materials, nonwoven fabrics, and film, the at least one member being made of a biodegradable and bioabsorbable material.

4. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein the sheet-like material and a stretchable knitted material or woven material are stacked into a tubular shape.

5. (Original) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein a projection is formed on the sewing end portion of the one or two sheet-like materials forming the tubular shape.

6. (Currently amended) A tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1, wherein extended thread ends at the sewing end are tied in a ring the shape of a loop.

7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Currently amended) A method for manufacturing a tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device comprising:

stacking two sheet-like materials,

sewing together both ends of one or the two sheet-like materials using a two chain stitches (intralooping stitches) with a single thread to give a tubular suture reinforcement material, and

suitably extending one or two each thread ends at one or two each sewing ends,
and

passing the thread end through an anterior loop continuous to the thread end.

11. (Original) An automatic suturing device, comprising a cartridge containing staples and a frame equipped with a staple receiving slot, wherein a tubular suture reinforcement material for an automatic suturing device according to Claim 1 is fitted to the cartridge and/or the frame.

12. (Currently amended) A method for removing a lesion from an affected region of a patient,

suturing said affected region with a tubular suture reinforcement material according to Claim 1,

cutting off the lesion from normal tissue in the affected region, and

removing said lesion along with a part of said suture reinforcement material while leaving another part of said suture reinforcement material in the patient.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the affected region comprises a soft tissue.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 13, wherein the affected region comprises pulmonary tissue.